

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SSC-01

CU-02 /059 W

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R 112147Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9646

INFO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 6480

E.O. 11652: GDS

SUBJECT: THE WEEK IN COLOMBIA

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: COLOMBIANS, IN COMMON WITH MANY OTHER LATINS, WATCHED WITH DISMAY , BUT VERY LITTLE SURPRISE THE SEEMING DIS-
SOLUTION OF THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL FABRIC OF THE ARGENTINA
REPUBLIC. IN BOGOTA, IN CONTRAST TO BUENOS AIRES, THE INSTITUT-
IONS OF GOVERNMENT CONTINED TO SERVE THEIR PURPOSE EFFECTIVELY.
TWO CABINET CHANGES WERE ANNOUNCED LATE IN THE WEEK AND A NEW
RECTOR WAS NOMINATED FOR THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY. THE PROPOSED
CHANGES WERE NOTABLE, LARGELY, FOR THE MATTER-OF-FACT WAY IN
WHICH THEY WERE HANDLED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND RECEIVED BY THE
PUBLIC AND PRESS. OTHER, LESS FORTUNATE ASPECTS OF LIFE IN
COLOMBIA ALSO CONTINUED AT THEIR USUAL PACE. DESPITE THE RE-
INSTITUTION OF A "STATE OF SIEGE", SEVERAL WELL PUBLICIZED
KIDNAPPINGS TOOK PLACE. BY WEEK'S END, HOWEVER, ONE GROUP OF
CRIMINALS HAD PAID HEAVILY FOR THEIR ACTIVITIES; AUTHORI-
TIES ANNOUNCED THE DEATH OF THREE GANGSTERS AND THE
RECOVERY OF SOME 60,000 DOLLARS. END SUMMARY

2. NEW FACES IN THE LOPEZ GOVERNMENT. LONG AWAITED
CHANGES IN THE LOPEZ CABINET TOOK PLACE THIS WEEK WITH THE
RESIGNATIONS OF LIBERAL CONGRESSMAN ALBERTO SANTOFIMIO
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AS MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSERVATIVE EDUARDO DEL

HIERRO AS MINISTER OF MINES. TO REPLACE SANTOFIMIO, WHO NOW AIMS AT THE PRESIDENCY OF THE LOWER HOUSE, LOPEZ HAS NAMED RESPECTED CONSERVATIVE ECONOMIST SAMUEL HOYOS ARANGO, TO THE DELIGHT OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY. THE PRESIDENT HAS CALLED UPON LIBERAL SENATOR JUAN JOSE TURBAY (NOT A CLOSE RELATION OF AMBASSADOR TURBAY) AS MINISTER OF MINES. THE 55-YEAR OLD HOYOS IS AN EXPERT IN COFFEE ECONOMICS, WAS THE FOUNDER OF THE SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, AND ONLY A MONTH AND A HALF AGO WAS NAMED AS A PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR. TURBAY, A MEMBER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY NATIONAL DIRECTORATE WAS A CO-FOUNDER WITH LOPEZ OF THE REVOLUTIONARY LIBERAL MOVEMENT (MRL) OF THE 1960'S, AND CONTINUES TO BE A CLOSE ALLY OF THE PRESIDENT. LOPEZ HAS MAINTAINED THE NECESSARY LIBERAL-CONSERVATIVE PARITY WITHIN THE CABINET ALTHOUGH THE CONSERVATIVES HAVE APPARENTLY COME OUT A STEP AHEAD WITH THE IMPORTANT MINISTRY OF JUSTICE IN THEIR HANDS. LOPEZ HAS HANDLED THE MINISTERIAL CHANGES IN A LOW-KEYED MANNER, PLAYING DOWN ANY APPEARANCE OF A MAJOR MINISTERIAL CRISIS. HOWEVER, FURTHER CABINET CHANGES MAY BE IN THE OFFING.

3. PRESIDENT LOPEZ ALSO NOMINATED LUIS MESA VELASQUEZ TO REPLACE MARXIST LUIS CARLOS PEREZ AS RECTOR OF THE TROUBLED NATIONAL UNIVERSITY. PEREZ WAS FIRED ON JUNE 4 (BOGOTA 5095) FOLLOWING A STUDENT TAKEOVER OF BOGOTA'S LARGEST HOSPITAL AND SUBSEQUENT STUDENT STRIKE AND DEMONSTRATIONS. HOWEVER, HE HAS REMAINED AT HIS POST UNTIL NOW BECAUSE OF LOPEZ'S FAILURE TO LOCATE A QUALIFIED PERSONALITY WILLING TO TAKE ON THE JOB OF CARETAKER OF COLOMBIA'S LARGEST UNIVERSITY. THE NEW NOMINEE IS A LIBERAL WHO HAS SERVED AS RECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ANTIOQUIA FOR THE PAST EIGHT MONTHS. HE WAS A MEMBER OF THE SUPREME COURT'S PENAL SECTION FOR THE SIX PREVIOUS YEARS AS WAS PEREZ. MESA HAS GRACIOUSLY ACKNOWLEDGED LOPEZ'S OFFER OF THE NUMBER ONE UNIVERSITY JOB IN COLOMBIA, BUT HAS SO FAR NOT INDICATED WHETHER HE WILL ACCEPT ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S MOST PERPLEXING AND THANKLESS TASKS.

4. COLOMBIAN AMBASSADOR DEPARTS FOR CUBA. COLOMBIA'S AMBASSADOR TO CUBA RAMIRO ANDRADE TERAN DEPARTED BOGOTA FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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CUBA THIS WEEK (BOGOTA 3975). ANDRADE AND HIS FAMILY WILL VISIT MIAMI FOR A FEW DAYS FIRST, AT THE INSISTENCE OF HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTER WHO CLAIMED THE VISIT AS THEIR DUE, AS "COMPENSATION" FOR HAVING TO GO TO CUBA. ANDRADE, A LONG TERM ADMIRER OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTION, TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER THAT HE AGREED TO THE VISIT ALTHOUGH HE REJECTED THE PRINCIPLE OF "COMPENSATION" IN THIS CASE.

5. ACCORDING TO ANDRADE THE COLOMBIAN MISSION IN HAVANA

WILL CONSIST OF SEVEN PERSONS; HIMSELF AND A MINISTER COUNSELOR, FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD SECRETARIES, AND TWO CLERICAL PERSONNEL. AT A LATER DATE ANDRADE PLANS TO REQUEST THE ASSIGNMENT OF CULTURAL AND COMMERCIAL ATTACHES. A FONOFF SOURCE SAID THE REQUEST WOULD BE HONORED. ANDRADE IS PRECEDING THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE MISSION IN ORDER TO SELECT A CHANCERY AND RESIDENCE. ACCORDING TO FONOFF SOURCES THE CUBANS HAVE NOT YET ANNOUNCED AN ARRIVAL DATE FOR THEIR MISSION AND HAVE NOT EVEN SENT AN ADVANCE MAN.

6. ANDRADE, A LIBERAL SENATOR AND INTIMATE OF PRESIDENT LOPEZ, SAYS HE PLANS TO REMAIN AS AMBASSADOR ONLY ONE YEAR AND RETURN TO REOCCUPY HIS SENATORIAL SEAT IN JULY 1976, WHEN THE YEAR'S CONGRESSIONAL SESSION BEGINS. HE ALSO INTENDS TO RETURN TO TAKE PART IN THE APRIL 1976 ELECTION CAMPAIGN FOR DEPARTMENTAL AND MUNICIPAL OFFICES.

7. ANDRADE'S APPOINTMENT AS AMB TO CUBA REFLECTS A FAIRLY COMMON COLOMBIAN PRACTICE OF ACCREDITING LEFTISTS TO COMMUNIST REGIMES, APPARENTLY ON THE THEORY THAT THEY WILL ENJOY BETTER ENTREE AND RAPPORT THAN WOULD OTHERS.

8. POSSIBLE LOPEZ VISIT TO BOLIVIA. THE FONOFF COULD NOT, AS OF JULY 10, OFFICIALLY CONFIRM THE REPORTED PLANS OF PRESIDENT LOPEZ TO VISIT BOLIVIA ON AUG 4. A HIGH MINISTRY OFFICIAL, HOWEVER, INDICATED THAT HE CONSIDERED THE VISIT A PROBABILITY. LOCAL INTEREST IN THE BOLIVIAN VISIT HAS LARGELY CENTERED ON THE QUESTION OF WHO WOULD SERVE AS ACTING PRESIDENT DURING THE BRIEF VISIT. SINCE DESIGNADO TURBAY IS NOW ON POST AT THE WASHINGTON EMBASSY.
WHITE

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Message Attributes

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